Case markers in Tsou: a semantic study *

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Introduction

 $Tsou^1$ is an Austronesian² language spoken in the *Mt Ali* area in the Southwest of Taiwan. It includes three dialects that are geographically distributed as follows: the *tapangu* and the *tfuea*³ dialects are spoken in villages situated in the district of *Wu-feng* (*Chiayi* prefecture); the *duhtu* dialect is spoken in only one village, located in the district of *Hsin-yi* (*Nant'ou* prefecture)⁴.

Though Tsou phonology has been well studied (cf. Tung:1964; Ho:1976; Tsuchida:1976), various syntactic and semantic aspects are still poorly understood and most of the discussions dwell on whether Tsou is an ergative language or not (cf. Starosta:1988, 1991). Tung's descriptive study (op.cit.) represents by far the most comprehensive work on the language.

Tsou patterns like other (extra-) Fomosan languages (cf. Atayal, Amis, Tagalog) in having a nominal case marking cross-referenced on the verb, i.e. full NPs are preceded by case markers; the semantic role of the NP selected as the 'subject' of the sentence is (morphologically) marked on the verb by means of an affix. It differs from these languages, however, in having developed a complex (and interrelated) system of preverbs⁵ and case markers which do not only encode syntactic relations but also contain semantic information (i.e. preverbs carry aspectual and modal information; case markers function as deictics). In this paper, we will examine the nominal case marking system of *Tsou*. Taking Tung's analysis as a starting point, we will show how a semantic study can account for the (syntactic) distribution of case markers in that language (i.e. their (im)possible permutation with one another as well as their (non-)permissible co-occurrence with various kinds of preverbs).

For the sake of clarity, we first present a brief account of the structure of the language.

* This paper represents a revised version of my MA thesis (1992).

¹. Tsou is also known as Northern Tsou, by opposition to Saaroa and Kanakanavu referred to as Southern Tsou.

 2 . The Austronesian family includes a variety of languages spoken not only in Taiwan but also in inland southern Vietnam, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

³. Our data is based on this dialect. It was collected at different times in 1991-1992.

4. Cf. Li (1979) for a study of the phonological variations found in these dialects.

⁵. The term 'preverb' is used as a cover term to designate all the particles (e.g. focus markers, pronorninal clitics, aspectual markers ...) that may occur before the 'main' verb.

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Wen, Nien-mei 1990. A Surrey of Language Behavior and Vitality in Taoyuan. M. A. thesis, NTNU. 1. Preliminary remarks 1.1. Word order

As (1) and (2) illustrate, *Tsou* is a verb-initial language.

(1) a. moso muchu⁶ AF-ferr rain 'It rained'

> b. mi cu etamaku AF-Imm Asp smoke 'He is already smoking'

(2) a. tena movafo ?e ino

will go out Nm mother 'Mother wants to /will go out'

b. mo meoeoi to peisu to ino ?o o?yu AF-Rem steal Obl money Obl mother Nm thief 'The thief stole mother's money / The thief stole mother money'

The above examples show that the verb can (optionally) be followed by a string of NPs. One of these NPs must be marked as the 'focus'⁷ of the clause. This NP is syntactically characterized by the fact that (i) it must be preceded by a nominative case marker (cf. 2e in (2a), 2o in (2b)), (ii) its semantic role is morphologically marked on the verb. (iii) it occurs clause-finally⁸ except when preceded by spatio-

⁷. We follow the conventional usage among Austronesian linguists in using the term 'focus' instead of 'topic' as others do. This term must be understood here as referring to the syntactic and semantic relationship established between a predicate (either verbal or non-verbal) and the NP which surfaces as the 'subject' of the sentence (i.e. the in-focus NP).

 8 . In (mono)transitive sentences, the inversion of the two NPs yields semantic variations that may infer on the grammaticality of the example. Compare (i) = (4) and (ii).

(i) a.[mo bonu]_V [to tacumu]_O [?o amo]_S . AF-Imm eat-AF Obl banana Nm father 'Father is eating / has eaten a banana'

b. $[i-si \quad ana]_V [to \quad amo]_O[?o \ tacumu]_S$ NAF-Imm-3sg eat-NAF Obl father Nm banana 'A banana has been eaten by father'

(ii) a. $?^*[mo] bonu_V [?o amo]_S [to tacumu]_O$

temporal adjuncts (eg. *tan?e* 'here', *nehucma* 'yesterday'). By contrast, non-focused NPs (i) are preceded by an oblique case marker (cf. *to* in (2b)) and (ii) their semantic role is not coded on the verb. As an illustration, consider the following examples. In the glosses, the following abbreviations: AF, TF and LF are used to signal that the verbs are respectively marked (by the addition of a suffix or a prefix) as Agent-Focus, Theme-Focus and Location-Focus. In each sentence, the verbal suffix or prefix and the in-focus NP are underlined⁹.

(3) a. mo <u>mosi</u> ta pangka to emi <u>?o amo</u> (maitan?e) AF-Rem AF-put Obl table Obl wine Nm father Father put some wine on the table (today)'

b. *i-si* sia ta pangka to amo <u>?o emi</u> (maitan?e) NAF-Imm-3sg put-TF Obl table Obl father Nm wine 'The wine was put by father on the table (today)'

c. *i-si* si<u>i</u> to emi to amo <u>?e pangka</u> (maitan?e) NAF-Imm-3sg put-LF Obl wine Obl father Nm table 'The table is (the place where) father put some wine on'

In (3a), the semantic role of the in-focus NP 2o amo 'father' is marked by the morphological inflection of the verb (i.e. the prefix mo- is added to the stem of si 'put'). As an in-focus NP, amo is marked by the nominative case marker 2o and occurs in final position (or just before the adjunct maitan?e 'today'). We will refer to this type of sentences as A(gent) F(ocus) constructions. By the same process, the morphological inflection of the verb in (3b-c) determines the semantic role of the NP designated as the in-focus NP; it occurs clause-finally and is preceded by a nominative case marker. We will refer to this type of sentences as N(on)-A(gent) F(ocus) constructions.

We have shown above that the NP promoted as the in-focus NP generally occurs clause-finally. According to Greenberg's (1963) language typology, *Tsou* can therefore be defined as a V-O-S language.

(4) a. V O S
 [mo bon#] [to tac#m#][?o amo]
 AF-Imm eat-AF Obl banana Nm father
 Father is eating a banana'

AF-Imm eat-AF Nm father Obl banana

b. [i-si ana] $_V$ [?o tacumu]_S [to amo]_O NAF-Imm-3sg eat-NAF Nm banana Obl father 'Father's banana has been eaten by someone'

⁹ See Tsuchida (1976 : 85ff) for a discussion on Tsou morphology.

⁶. In our examples, b and d stand for the respective implosives [b] and [d] while ? represent the glottal stop [?] and ng the velar nasal [a].

In the glosses, the following abbreviations will be used: Adv: Adverb; AF: Agent-Focus; Asp: Aspect particle; Imm: Immediate; Frq: Frequentative; NAF: Non-Agent focus; Neg: Negation; Nm: Nominative; Obl: Oblique, Rem: Remote.

b. V O S [*i-si* ana] [to amo][?o tacumu] NAF-Imm-3sg eat-NAF Obl father Nm banana 'A banana has been eaten by father'

We have only dealt so far with *Tsou* sentential word order. Let's have a closer look at the constituents of the sentence. In the two following sections, the clause phrase and the noun phrase are examined successively.

1.2. Clause structure

(6a) shows that the verb *etamaku* 'smoke' is preceded by a string of preverbs, among which only *moso* is obligatory. Compare the grammaticality of (6a-c).

- (6) a. o?a moso s?a da etamaku ?o ohaeva
 Neg AF-Rem Adv Asp smoke Nm younger sibilant
 'My younger brother never smoked'
 - b. * o?a s?a da etamaku ?o ohaeva Neg Adv Asp smoke Nm younger sibilant
 - c. moso etamaku ?o ohaeva AF-Rem smoke Nm younger sibilant 'My younger brother smoked/ws smoking'

moso belongs to a group of preverbs which usually occur at the very beginning of the clause¹⁰. They fall into two distinct classes:

(1) some occur only in (a) AF constructions (*mio*, *moso*, *mi*-, *mo*(*h*)-), or (b) NAF constructions (*i*-, o(h)-), while

(2) others occur either in AF or NAF constructions (te, tena, ta, nte, nto, da).

We will first state briefly their syntactic distribution before turning our attention to their semantic function.

Syntactically, we follow Starosta (1988) in assuming that focus markers represent the head of their clause since they can be followed by aspectual markers $(c^{2}u/cu \text{ 'already'}, n^{2}a \text{ 'still'}, da \dots)$ and various adverbs; they can be negated and pronominal clitics must be attached to them. As an illustration, consider (8).

(8) <u>o?a</u> moh-<u>ta</u> <u>s?a</u> <u>da</u> ahtu¹¹ etamaku Neg AF-Rem-3sg Adv Asp never smoke 'He never smoked'

As mentioned above, focus markers do not only encode syntactic relations but also contain semantic information 1^2 .

The focus markers belonging to the first group (cf. distinction made above) carry aspectual information. As noted by Tung (1964 : 92), they occur in complementary distribution: mi-, i- indicate that the events they determine (or their results) have (still) a certain relevance at Speech time (immediacy) whereas mo(h)- and o(h)-locate them in the past (remoteness), i.e. there exists a disconnection (or rupture) between the Event time and the Speech time. However, these situations may have a certain relevance at Reference time. With mi- and mo(h)- situations are viewed as taking place at Speech time/Reference time (imperfective or neutral aspect¹³) while with i-, o(h)- they are envisaged as completed (perfective aspect). (9) and (10) illustrate this contrast.

(9) a. *mi-ta mimo ta emi* AF-Imm-3sg drink Obl wine 'He is drinking wine'

b. *i-ta ima si emi* NAF-Imm-3sg drink Obl wine 'He has been drinking wine'

(10) a. moh-ta mimo to emi AF-Rem-3sg drink Obl wine 'He drank/was drinking wine ...'

> b. oh-ta ima to emi NAF-Rem-3sg drink Obl wine 'He had drunk wine'

11. Note that constituents translated as durative and frequentative time adverbs in English function as verbs in Tsou. For a detailed discussion, see Zeitoun (1992: 188-19).

¹². The semantic functions of the above-mentioned focus markers are described very briefly and illustrated with examples only if it has a certain relevance for the discussion presented in section 2.
¹³. A comparison the following pair of examples shows that the imperfective/neutral interpretations depend on the context (e.g. verbs, aspectual preverbs, case markers...).

(i) i-ne mo-?u uh-tan?e, moso <u>baito</u> to topsu ?o oko Tp-when AF-Rem-1sg go-here, AF-Rem see Obl book Nm child The child was reading a book when I arrived.

^{10.} They were labeled '(sentence) beginners' by Tung (1964). To refer to this class of preverbs, we prefer to use the term 'focus markers' because they determine the orientation (either active or passive) of the entire clause, i.e. if a focus marker is marked as AF, the following verb(s) will be marked as AF and the noun bearing the agent role will be selected as focus; if a focus marker is marked as NAF, then the morphological inflection of the verb will determine which NP in the clause (any NP except the one bearing the agent role) functions as the in-focus NP.

⁽ii) mo cu oebungu, <u>moh</u> cu <u>baito</u> to topsu ?o oko AF-Rem Asp finish-eat, AF-Rem Asp see Obl book Nm child "When he had finished eating, he <u>read</u> a book"

mio and moso differ from mi- and mo(h) in that pronominal clitics cannot be attached to them. Note, in passing, that both referring to an on-going event, they cannot co-occur with the aspectual markers cu/c^2u which both translate 'already'.

da refers to the scanning of a class of situations (iterative/generic) and by extension to the characteristic of the agent/actor of the sentence (11) while *te, tena, nte* and *nto* can be respectively analysed as deontic and epistemic modals.

(11) da-ta etamaku
 Frq-3sg smoke
 'He (usually) smokes/He is a smoker'

1.3. The noun phrase

Tsou case markers fall into two distinct classes - nominative case markers (?e, si, ta, ?o, na) precede the in-focus NP of the clause while oblique case markers (ta, to, no) precede any other NP (i.e. (in)direct objects as well as genetives) - and present the following characteristics:

(1) They occur before any simple (12a) or complex (12b) NPs.

(12) a. i-si eobaka <u>ta</u> ino <u>si</u> av?u NAF-Imm-3sg beat Obl mother Nm dog 'The dog has (just) been beaten by mother'

b. mo enghova <u>?e</u> psoevohngu ci mcoo <u>ta</u> ino?u AF-Imm blue Nm beautiful Rel eyes Obl mother-1sgGen 'The beautiful eyes of my mother are blue'

As a rule, they are obligatory, though with a very restricted class of verbs (*eaa* 'have', *mihia* 'buy'), the presence of a case marker yields for an ungrammatical sentence¹⁴. Compare (13)-(14)

(13) a. o?a te-?o mihino to tposu Neg will-1sg buy Obl book 'I don't want to/won't buy books'

b. * o?a te-?o mihino 0 tposu Neg will-1sg buy 0 books

(14) a. o?a mi-?o s?a eaa <u>0</u> oko Neg Imm-1sg Adv have 0 child 'I don't have any child'

14. It has been suggested by Li (p.c) that in this case, the noun is incorporated into the verb.

b. * o?a mi-?o s?a eaa si oko Neg Imm-1sg Adv have Nm child

(2) In complex NPs, oblique case markers occur in complementary distribution with the nominalizer ci: ta, to or no occur between two nouns while ci occurs between a predicate and a noun. Compare (15a-b):

(15) a. mcoo <u>to</u> ino eye Obl mother 'the eyes of mother

> b. enghova <u>ci</u> mcoo blue Rel eye 'blue eyes'

Having outlined the structure of Tsou, let's now concentrate on the semantic functions of the case markers just mentioned above. In the following sections, we will first review Tung's analysis and show its limits in arguing that the whole situation of enunciation must be taken into account. It includes three parameters: Speech location, Speech time and Speech participants.

2. *Tsou* case markers: a semantic approach 2.1. Comments on Tung's (1964) analysis

In his (1964) publication -- which has been largely accepted among the linguistic cercle on Austronesian languages -- Tung suggests that *Tsou* case markers localize the objects referred to with respect to the speaker (and the addressee) and that they should be classified according to the following parameters: proximity, visibility and definiteness. Below, we reproduce partially the table proposed by Tung (op.cit. : 147) to account for their distribution.

Table 1: A classification of Tsou case markers

Function Characteristics Being seen by the speaker and the hearer	Nominative	Oblique
near	?e	ta
middle	si	ta
distant	ta	ta
Not being seen by both		
but having been seen by the speaker	?o	to

and having not been seen by the speaker

.

no

- The following examples illustrate this table:
- (16) a. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>?e</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child <u>'This</u> child <u>is eating</u> a banana'
 - b. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>si</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child '<u>That child is eating</u> a banana'
 - c. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>ta</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child '<u>That child (over there) is eating</u> a banana'
 - d. mo bonu to tacumu 20 oko AF-Imm/Rem eat Obl banana Nm child 'The child (unseen) is/was cating a banana'
 - e. mo bon<u>u no</u> tacumu <u>na</u> oko AF-Imm/Rem eat Obl banana Nm child '<u>A child is/was</u> eating a banana'

Though Tung's analysis is fundamentally correct¹⁵, it misses a certain number of generalizations:

na

(1) A brief comparison of (16a-e) shows that the co-occurrence of different case markers with the same (initial) preverb infers on the meaning of the whole

¹⁵. It accounts for instance for the (un)grammaticality of the following examples:

(i) os-?o aftungu <u>?e_mucu-?u</u> NAF-Imm-1sg break Nm arm-1sgGen 'My arm is broken'

(ii) * os-?o aftungu <u>si</u> mucu-?u NAF-Imm-1sg break Nm arm-1sgGen

(iii) * os-?o aftungu <u>ta</u> mucu-?u NAF-Imm-1sg break Nm arm-1sgGen

In (ii-iii), the occurrence of si and ta yields ungrammatical utterances. Both differ from ?e in that they indicate that the element referred to is located somewhere around the speaker. The impossible occurrence of si and ta in both examples can easily be accounted for: the use of one of this case maker would imply that the arm is not 'attached' to the speaker's body.

utterrance (compare (16a-c)-(16d) and (16d)-(16e)), that is to say case markers and preverbs seem to form an intricate system.

(2) Table (1) suggests that there exists an agreement in 'visibility' and/or 'definiteness' between the nominative and oblique case markers (e.g. if the in-focus NP of a clause is marked by 2e, si or ta then it seems that the non-focused NPs should be preceded by ta). Though in complex NPs, there exists such an agreement, two NP arguments may be followed by different case markers (e.g. 2e and to). Compare the grammaticality of (17b) and (18b).

(17) a. mo enghova <u>?e</u> psoevohngu ci mcoo ta ino?u
 [+visible] [+visible]
 AF-Imm blue Nm beautiful Rel eyes Obl mother-1sg-Gen
 The beautiful eyes of my mother are blue'

b. mo enghova <u>?e</u> psoevohngu ci mcoo <u>ta</u> ino?u [+visible] [+visible] AF-Imm blue Nm beautiful Rel eyes Obl mother-1sg-Gen 'The beautiful eyes of my mother are blue'

(18) a. <u>moso</u> eobako ta oko <u>?e</u> ino [+visible] [+visible] AF-Rem beat Obl child Nm mother 'This mother/Mother beat the child'

> b. <u>moso</u> eobako ta oko <u>?o</u> ino [+visible] [-visible] AF-Rem beat Obl child Nm mother 'The mother (unseen) beat the child (seen)'

In order to give a unified treatment of *Tsou* case markers, we have to resolve the apparent contradiction lying in the use of 'only' three oblique case markers (cf. ta, to, no) while nominative case markers are 'so' numerous (cf. 2e, si, ta, 2o, na).

(3) Tung argues that (a) if an NP is preceded by 2e, si or ta, it indicates that the referee is being 'seen' by both the speaker and the addressee -- his assumption presupposes that they are standing side by side and face the object in question -- and that (b) if an NP is preceded by 2o, to, the referee has not been 'seen' by the addressee (i.e. it is thus 'unknown' to him). However, his analysis cannot account for the following examples. It incorrectly predicts that (19b) is grammatical and (20) ill-formed.

(19) a. os-?o¹⁶ tadua <u>?e</u> ino-?u NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen Tve thought about my mother'

b. * *i-su* tadua <u>?e</u> ino-<u>su</u> NAF-Imm-2sg think about Nm mother-2sgGen

(20) os-?o aiti ?o oko-su NAF-Imm-1sg see Nm child-2sgGen I have seen your child'

Below, we will show that:

(1) there exists a dichotomy between ta, to / ?e, st, ta, ?o on this one hand and na and no on the other. The latter are used in more restricted contexts, usually where the 'scanning'¹⁷ of a class of occurrences is made possible (see section 2.2.3. below).

(2) (with the exception of na and no), nominative and oblique case markers can be (semantically) divided into a binary system: ?e, si, ta (Nm), ta (Obl) 'here (visible)' vs ?o, to 'there (invisible)' which correlates the deictic system of Tsou (cf. ina 'here, this' vs ta?e 'there, that (vis)') and corresponds respectively to the internal/external sphere of the speaker. In order to give a unified account of this system, the spatio-temporal coordinates (Speech Location, Speech Time) cannot be ignored.

?e, si, ta (Nm, Obl) can be further divided into two subgroups (cf. ?e, ta (Obl) vs. si/ta (Nm)) but to fully understand this dichotomy, the location of the speaker with regard to the addressee must be taken into account.

If this analysis is correct, it implies that the concept of Time (cf. immediacy vs remotness) parallels that of Space (cf. internal vs external sphere of the speaker).

2.2. 'Definite' case markers

Based on the syntactic distribution of case markers, i.e. their (non)-permissible permutation with one another and their (im)possible co-occurrence with various kinds of preverbs, we will try to prove in this section the validity of the assumptions just mentioned above.

¹⁷. This term (translated from French, cf. 'parcours') is taken from Culioli (1970). It is close to McCawley's 'relationship...which exhausts the whole set'. (See McCawley, 1973: 311).

2.2.1. (Internal) sphere of the speaker 2.2.1. ?e, ta (Obl) vs si/ta (Nm, Obl)

Let's first consider the following examples (21a-c)=(16a-c) in which *?e, si* and *ta* can be substituted by one for the other.

(21) a. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>?e</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child 'This child is eating a banana'

> b. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>si</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child 'That child is eating a banana'

c. mo bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu <u>ta</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl banana Nm child 'That child (over there) is eating a banana'

Those sentences only slightly differ in meaning: in (21a), the speaker points to the child who is located near him while in (21b-c), he designates a child located at a further distance. The speaker and the addressee may either stand side by side, in which case the relation just mentioned holds true or they may face each other, in which case the referee will be located near the addressee (by opposition to the speaker) in (21b) but away from both in (21c).

Based on our foregoing discussion, it seems that the system of 'definite' case markers function according to a four way distinction, i.e. according to the proximal, medial, distal (but still visible), distal (and invisible) location of the referee with respect to the speech participants. Such an analysis would lead us to make incorrect predictions, however.

Consider first the following pairs of examples:

- (22) a. *i-?o* tadua <u>?e</u> ino-<u>?u</u> NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen
 - b. * *i-?o tadua <u>si</u> ino-<u>?u</u>* NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen.
 - c. * i-?o tadua <u>ta</u> ino-<u>2u</u> NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen

d. i-?o tadua <u>?o</u> ino-?u NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen

¹⁶. In the first person (singular), os- is another variant of *i*-.

How can we account for the co-occurrence of ?e -- while that of si or ta yields ungrammatical utterances -- with the verb tadua 'think of/think about' which entails the absence of the referee at Speech time ?

A comparison of (23a-d) show moreover that when the speaker and the addressee are viewed as a disjoint reference (i.e. they cannot be identified one for the other either spatially or metaphorically), the use of *?e* renders the sentence ungrammatical.

(23) a. *i-?o* tadua <u>?e</u> ino-<u>?u</u> NAF-Imm-1sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen

b. * *i-su tadʉa <u>?e</u> ino-<u>su</u>* NAF-Imm-2sg think about Nm mother-2sgGen 'You have thought about his mother'

c. *i-su* tadua <u>?o</u> ino-<u>su</u> NAF-Imm-2sg think about Nm mother-2sgGen 'You have thought about your mother'

d. *i-su* tadua <u>?e</u> ino-<u>?u</u> NAF-Imm-2sg think about Nm mother-1sgGen 'You have thought about my mother'

In (23b), the possessive pronoun su 'your' indicates a disconnection between the speaker and the NP *ino* (speaker vs addressee). As a consequence, only 2o can occur in the sentence. In (23d), the use of possessive pronoun 2u 'my' gives back its well-formedness to the utterance since the addressee is identified to the speaker.

In (24), the use of the oblique case marker ta is ambiguous in that it may either refer to an object belonging to the speaker (by opposition to the addressee) or located somewhere around the speaker and the adressee.

(24) *mi-ko mixino ta tposu* AF-Imm-2sg buy Obl book 'Have you bought this/that book ?'

To summarize, we have shown so far that the speaker and the addressee may or may not be identified spatially/metaphorically. Their location with respect with one one another infers on the use of ?e, si and ta (Nm/Obl): if the speaker and the addressee are viewed as a conjoint reference, then ?e, si, ta (Nm/Obl) can be substituted and refer to the spatial location of the referee with respect to the speech participants. If the speaker and the addressee are regarded as a disjoint reference, ?e and ta (Obl) -- which refer to the location of the speaker -- will be used by opposition to si and ta (Nm), i.e. the addressee. We turn now to a brief account of ?o and to, in contrast with ?e, si and ta.

2.2.2. ?o (Nm) and to (Obl): external sphere of the speaker

It has been observed already that both ?o and to belong to a sphere external to that of the speaker. They indicate a rupture in terms of space and time. Our analysis is further supported by the following pairs of examples:

(25) a. <u>da</u>-ta huhucmasi bonu <u>to</u> tacumu Frq-3sg everyday eat Obl banana He eats a banana everyday

> b. * <u>da</u>-ta huhucmasi bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu Frq-3sg everyday eat Obl banana

- (26) a. <u>da-ta</u> kaebu bonu <u>to</u> huv?o Frq-3sg happy eat Obl orange He likes eating oranges
 - b. <u>da</u>-ta kaebu bonu <u>ta</u> huv?o Frq-3sg happy eat Obl orange 'He likes eating oranges
- (27) a. o?a moh-ta s?a <u>da</u> ahtu etamaku <u>to</u> tamaku Neg AF-Rem-3sg Adv Asp never smoke Obl cigarette 'He never smoked cigarettes'

b. * o?a moh-ta s?a da ahtu etamaku ta tamaku Neg AF-Rem-3sg Adv Asp never smoke Obl cigarette

da functions as a focus marker in (25)-(26), and as an aspectual marker in (27)¹⁸. Both da_1 and da_2 indicate a rupture with the Speech time: da_1 refers to the scanning of a class of occurrences or by implication to the characteristic of the agent of a given sentence while da_2 locates events in the past. However, both have a oristic proprieties (i.e. they indicate a rupture with Speech time). As a consequence, in each example, to but not ta can co-occur with da.

Our analysis accounts also for the ungrammaticality of (28b) and for the semantic variation yielded by the substitution of ta by to in (29b).

(28) a. mi-?o <u>n?a bonu ta</u> tacumu AF-Imm-1sg Asp eat Obl banana Tm eating a banana'

^{18.} For a justification of this dichotomy, see Zeitoun (op.cit.: 51-56)

b. * mi-?o <u>n?a</u> bonu <u>to</u> tacumu AF-Imm-1sg Asp eat Obl banana Tm eating a banana'

(29) a. mi-?o <u>cu</u> bonu <u>ta</u> tacumu AF-Imm-1sg Asp eat Obl banana I have been eating a banana'

> b. mi-?o <u>cu</u> bonn <u>to</u> tacumu AF-Imm-1sg Asp eat Thave eaten a banana'

In (28), the aspectual marker n^2a refers to an on-going action. to cannot co-occur with n^2a because it refers to an object located outside the (spatial/enunciative) sphere of the speaker.

In (29b), both ta and to can co-occur with cu. cu is a marker of perfect: it indicates an anteriority (i.e. the event referred to is prior to the time of Speech or to the point taken as Referent time). It indicates at the same time that the event in question (or its result) is still relevant at the point given as Referent time (i.e. resultant state). It doesn't enable us to determine whether the situation is past and completed or still on-going. Such an interpretation is inferred by the presence of other constituents (cf. case markers). In (29a), the use of ta indicates that the banana is still being eaten at Speech time while that of to makes the addressee understand that it has already been eaten (resultant state) in (29b).

Our analysis further accounts for the semantic variations found in the following pair of examples.

(30) a. <u>moso</u> eobako <u>ta</u> oko <u>?e/si/ta</u> ino
 AF-Rem beat Obl child Nm mother
 'The mother beat the child' (Both are seen at speech time)

b. <u>moso</u> eobako to oko <u>?o</u> ino AF-Rem beat Obl child Nm mother 'The mother beat the child' (Both are unseen at speech time)

In both examples, *moso* indicates a disconnection) between Speech time and the Event time. However, we are able to (correctly) predict that the use of ?e, si, ta (Obl, Nm) in (30a) entails the presence of both the mother and the child at speech time while the use of ?o and to in (30b) implies their absence.

The following schema summarizes our discussion:

Immediacy Internal sphere

Remoteness External sphere

speaker vs addressee ?e, ta (Obl) vs si, ta (Nm) speaker/addressee

?o. to

speaker and addressee ?e, si, ta

Let's turn now to a treatment of no and na, which can be treated as 'indefinite' case markers.

2.3. A unified treatment of no and na

In this section, we demonstrate that both *no* and *na* carry the same semantic function: they both refer to the scanning of a class of elements, the speaker refusing or being unable to choose any element of this class, by opposition to ?o and *to* which indicate that an element of the class has been extracted (i.e. it is identified at least by the speaker). This hypothesis is supported by the following arguments:

(1) A comparison of (29)-(30) and (31)-(32) shows that na and no do refer to the extraction of (at least) one element of a class but that this element is not / cannot be identified by the speaker. Hence, no and na cannot co-occur with the possessive pronouns 2u 'my' and su 'your'.

(29) a. mo mongsi <u>?e</u> oko AF-Imm cry Nm child 'This child is crying'

> b. mo mongsi <u>2e</u> oko-<u>su</u> AF-Imm cry Nm child-2sgGen 'Your child is crying'

(30) a. mo mongsi <u>na</u> oko AF-Imm cry Nm child 'A child is crying'

> b. * mo mongsi <u>na</u> oko-<u>su</u> AF-Imm cry Nm child-2sgGen

 (31) a. mcoo ta ino eye Obl mother 'the mother's (seen by the speaker/addressee) eyes' b. mcoo <u>ta</u> ino-<u>?u</u> eye Obl mother-1sgGen 'my mother's eyes'

(32) a. mcoo <u>no</u> ino eye Obl mother 'a(ny) mother's eyes'

> b. * mcoo <u>no</u> ino-<u>?u</u> eye Obl mother-1sgGen

In (33), however, no can co-occur with the possessive pronoun si 'his' because the NP *amo* 'father' is contextually left undetermined, the father in question being unknown to the speaker.

(33) i-si aiti no amo-si
 NAF-Imm-3sg see Obl father-3sgGen
 'He is seen (=looked at) by his father

(2) both no and na are used in interrogative sentences (i.e. the speaker scans a whole class of elements but being unable to pick up any element, he then asks the addressee to designate the right element), their substitution with other case markers yielding ungrammatical sentences. Compare (34)-(35). They occur in complementary distribution: na appear in NAF constructions (34a) whereas no occur in AF constructions (34b).

(34) a. cuma <u>na</u> i-si ana <u>ta</u> oko what Nm NAF-Imm-3sg eat Obl child 'What has the child (just) eaten ?'

b. mo bonu <u>no</u> cuma <u>si</u> oko AF-Imm eat Obl what Nm child 'What is that child eating ?'

(35) a. * cuma <u>?e/si/ta/?o</u> i-si ana <u>ta</u> oko what Nm NAF-Imm-3sg eat Obl child 'What has the child (just) eaten ?'

b. mo bonn ta/to cuma si oko AF-Imm eat Obl what Nm child 'What is that child eating ?'

Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to show that case markers in Tsou do not only fulfill a grammatical function but play also as the role of deictics. We argued that in order to give a unified account of this system different factors (speech time, speech place and speech participants) had to be taken into consideration, these case markers being divided according to a binary dichotomy (cf. internal vs external sphere of the speaker).

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Is Maga Accusative or Ergative? Evidence from Case Marking

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<u>0. Introduction</u>

Starting from a somewhat classical definition of ergativity, as the one given in Dixon (1979), we consider as an ergative language a language which marks the *subject of transitive sentences* (A) as opposed to the two other semantic arguments : *subject of intransitive sentences* (S) and *object of transitive* ones (O). On the other hand, an accusative language is one which marks the *object of transitive sentences* (O) as opposed to *subjects* of both transitive and intransitive sentences (S and A).

The object of this paper is to find out whether the Maga dialect of Rukai is to be regarded as an ergative or as an accusative language.

To achieve this goal, we shall have to characterize the case marking of Maga NP's, and see whether it relates to one of the schemata described above.

It shall soon appear that evidence resting on case marking shall not enable us to characterize Maga either as an ergative or as an accusative language at what Dixon (1979) called the *morphological* level. We shall gain greater insight by looking for generalizations at the *semantic* level rather than at the functional level. We shall namely be concerned with the thematic roles marked by cases.

1. Description of the Case System

1.1. The Pronouns